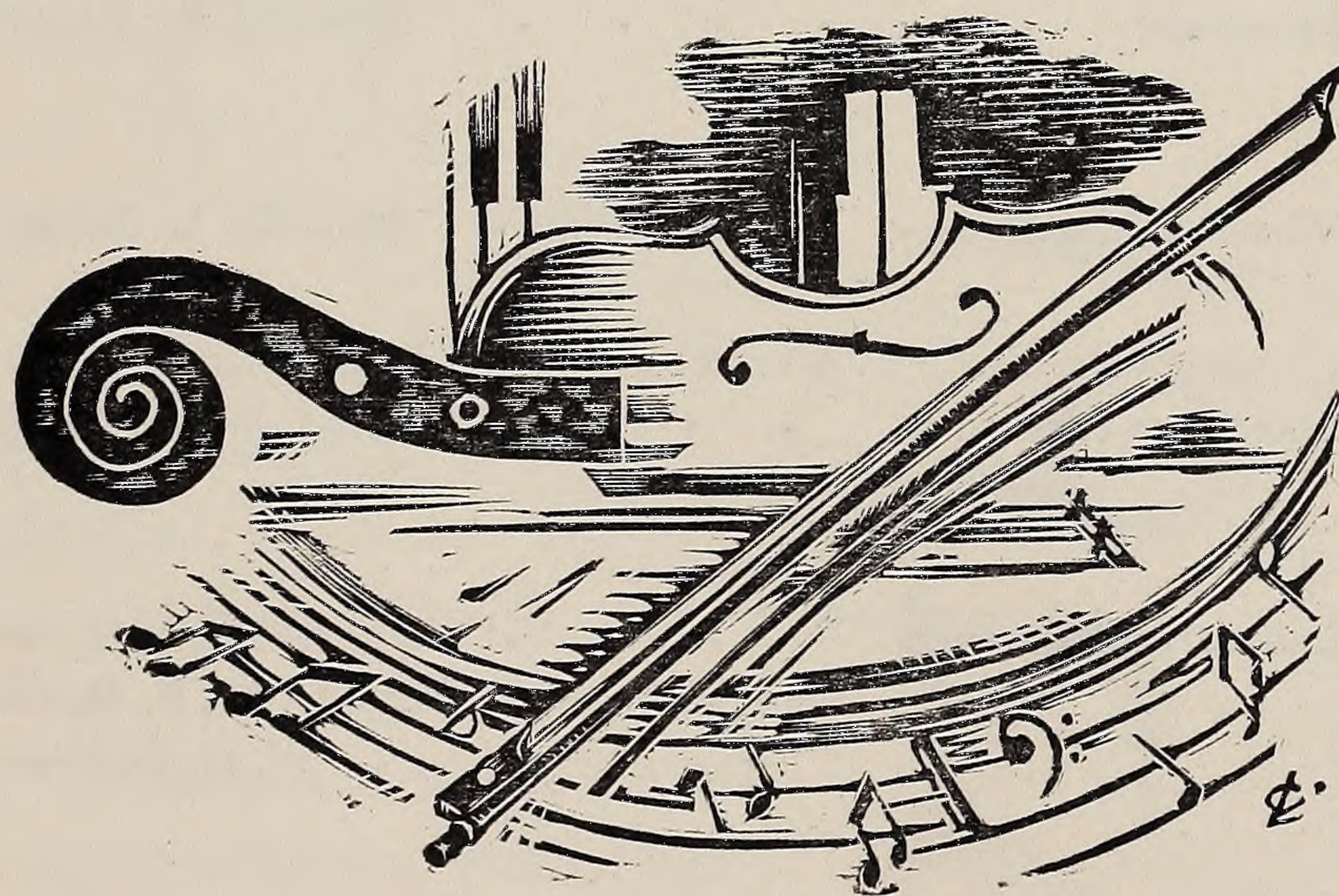


HAMILTON
CHAMBER MUSIC
SOCIETY



SIXTH SEASON - 1956-1957

PROGRAM BOOK

Vol. 6

HAMILTON CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY

Under the joint auspices of the
Fine Arts Department of McMaster University
and the
Hamilton Conservatory of Music

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Albeneri Trio

Parlow Quartet

Baritone—Bernard Diamant

Clarinet—Ezra Schabas

Violin—Hyman Bress

Piano—John Newmark

PROGRAMME NOTES

PROGRAMME I — NOVEMBER 3, 1956 - 8.30 P.M.

Convocation Hall, McMaster University

Albeniz Trio

Ward Davenny, Piano Giorgio Ciompi, Violin Benar Heifetz, 'Cello

All Beethoven Programme

Trio in C Minor, Op. 1, No. 3 (to Carl von Lichnowsky)

Allegro con brio

Andante cantabile con variazioni

Menuetto; Quasi allegretto

Finale; Prestissimo

Trio in D Major, Op. 70, No. 1 (to Marie von Erdödy)

Allegro vivace e con brio

Largo assai

Presto

INTERMISSION

Trio in B flat Major, Op. 97 ("Archduke") (to the Archduke Rudolph)

Allegro moderato

Scherzo

Andante cantabile ma pero con moto

Allegro moderato

(theme and five variations)

Ludwig Von Beethoven, 1770-1827

Beethoven added little to the existing vocabulary of music in terms of melody or harmonic innovation. Even in matters of form he blazed few new trails. It was through the world of rhythmic action and design that he gave to music a new and encompassing dimension unknown before and unapproached since.

The three trios here presented cover a span of some twenty years of intense creativity; they have an evolution of their own, culminating in the regal magnificence and full-bodied splendour of the "Archduke" dedicated to Rudolph but itself an assertion of the aspirations of all men.

Ferdinand Ries, a devoted pupil of Beethoven, has left an illuminating picture of the first performance of the three trios which comprise Opus I. The occasion was a soirée at the home of Prince Lichnowsky, Beethoven's intimate friend and patron; the time—1793, the year following Beethoven's arrival in Vienna. Ries writes as follows:

"Most of the artists and music lovers were invited, especially Haydn, for whose opinion all were eager. The Trios were played and at once

commanded extraordinary attention. Haydn said many pretty things about them, but advised Beethoven not to publish the third, in C Minor. This astonished Beethoven inasmuch as he considered the third the best of the set, as it still is the one which gives the greatest pleasure and makes the greatest effect. Consequently, Haydn's remarks left a bad impression on Beethoven and led him to think that Haydn was envious, jealous and ill-disposed toward him. I confess that when Beethoven told me of this I gave it little credence. I therefore took occasion to ask Haydn himself about it. His answer confirmed Beethoven's statement; he said he had not believed that this Trio would be so quickly and easily understood and so favourably received by the public."

Beethoven was, as we know, an extraordinary pianist and also a discerning and experienced string player. He found the combination of piano, violin and 'cello a natural and homogeneous medium so much to his liking that he wrote a total of eleven Trios, the last two in the form of Theme and Variations. Beethoven's masterly use of this grouping leads one to say that, next to the string quartet itself, the trio is the ideal vehicle insofar as the piano is concerned; integrated and balanced in a way that the piano quartets and quintets do not approach.

PROGRAMME II — FEBRUARY 2, 1957 - 8.30 P.M.

Convocation Hall, McMaster University

Parlow Quartet

Kathleen Parlow, Andrew Benac, Violins

Stanley Solomon, Viola

Isaac Mamott, 'Cello

with Ezra Schabas, Clarinet

Haydn Quartet in G Minor ("The Horseman"), Op. 74, No. 3

Allegro

Largo assai

Menuetto—Allegretto

Finale—Allegro con brio

In sheer productivity no composer has ever matched Haydn; his symphonies run well over a hundred and his string quartets total seventy-six. It is true that he did write with incredible ease and often without regard for the quality of his subject matter; indeed, any theme apparently would suffice to send him off on a full-scale work. In spite of this, he left many scores that endure and delight with their grace, charm, humour, and at times grandeur and depth of feeling. In every respect he was quite the opposite of Beethoven, who seldom used material as it came to him but patiently worked and re-worked before subjecting it to the probing and revealing life of sonata form.

Haydn is affectionately known as "The Father of the Symphony." He bears a similar relationship to the String Quartet and he, in turn, pays tribute to Emanuel Bach who was the real pioneer in Sonata Form.

"The Horseman" Quartet gets its apt title from the trotting character of the opening. Haydn's use of startling tonal shifts (usually between the first and the slow movement) is particularly telling in the expressive largo pitched in the richness of E Major.

Tschaikovsky Quartet in E flat Minor, Op. 30

Andante sostenuto—Allegro moderato

Allegretto vivo e scherzando

Andante funebre e doloroso

Allegro non troppo e risoluto

Kashkin, in his reminiscences of Tschaikovsky, tells us that the latter knew little chamber music as a young man and found the sound of the string quartet in particular quite unpalatable measured against the sonorities that filled his tonal imagination. He subsequently modified his opinion and in 1871 produced his first quartet, that in D Major, with its slow movement that has since become famous as the Andante Cantabile. Two others followed, the F Major in 1873 and the E Flat Minor in 1876. This latter one is generally regarded as the finest of the three in both matter and manner. The moving slow movement was written as a memorial to the great violinist Ferdinand Laube and realizes through the medium of the quartet the mystery and atmosphere of a Russian funeral service. The high spirits of the last movement have their roots in White Russian folk themes.

INTERMISSION

Brahms Quintet in B Minor, Op. 115

for Clarinet and String Quartet

Allegro

Adagio

Andantino—Presto non assai

Con moto

Gustave Langenus, a remarkable Belgian clarinetist and Benny Goodman's guide and mentor, said recently, "The clarinet is the most beautiful instrument in the world because it comes closest to the human voice." One might argue the point, but in its capacity to achieve the florid and the lyrical it is exceptional and what would appear to be a handicap, namely its lack of vibrato (except for some jazz performers) is actually its most distinguishing quality. It is particularly fine foil for the sensuous string tone.

The Brahms Clarinet Quintet is vintage Brahms at its best and there is about this score an inner beauty, a naturalness and a continual flow of intimate revelations which set it apart as one of the gems of chamber music.

The clarinet Trio Opus 114, and the present work, owe their existence mainly to the composer's admiration for Richard Mühlfeld, clarinetist of the Ducal Orchestra at Meiningen. Both works were performed in Berlin in 1891 with Joachim's Quartet associated with Mühlfeld.

PROGRAMME III — MARCH 9, 1957 - 8.30 P.M.

Convocation Hall, McMaster University

Giuseppe Tartini Trillo del Diavolo

Quasi Andante

Hyman Bress

John Newmark

Tartini, Corelli, Vivaldi; what music there is in these very names! Together they exerted a far-reaching influence on string playing and if not great, the music they produced was very fine.

This Sonata—Trillo del Diavolo—is not a sonata in the sense the Brahms is but rather in the other sense of the word; a sound piece in which Tartini explored and exploited facets of the violin unknown before. Naturally the piano is of secondary rather than of dual importance.

Active and gifted as a boy; Tartini enrolled at Padua University at the age of 17 as a law student, but his real passion was for art and fencing. A hasty marriage with a young lady beyond his reach socially and economically was just as hastily broken up by the furious father and Tartini was forced to flee. He found refuge at the Monastery of Assisi and while there turned his consuming mind to research in the violin and in particular strings and their acoustical properties. From this he turned to composition and it was here that the Devil's Trill Sonata was written. This work he attributed to a dream and as he describes it, "One night I dreamt that I had made a bargain with the devil for my soul. Everything went as I commanded and my novel servant anticipated my every wish. Then the idea suggested itself to hand him my violin to see what he would do with it. Great was my astonishment when I heard him play with consummate skill a sonata of such exquisite beauty as surpassed the boldest flights of my imagination. I felt enchanted, enraptured, transported; my breath failed me and I awoke, seized my violin and tried to repeat what I had heard. It was in vain. The piece I then composed "The Devil's Sonata," although the best I ever wrote, was far below that I had heard in my dream."

Schumann "Dichterliebe" (A Song Cycle)

Bernard Diamant

John Newmark

Schumann was one of the 19th century German composers who was markedly influenced by the literary romanticism of the time. While the critical assessment of his major works is not unanimously favourable, there is no doubt that he belongs to that select group of composers who have achieved the ultimate in the fusion of poetry and music. In the "Dichterliebe" he achieved a song cycle which is a supreme example of this art form.

This series of sixteen songs, written to the poetry of Henrich Heine, describes the frustration and disappointment the poet felt as a result of a luckless love affair with the daughter of his rich uncle. The theme opens with ecstatic joy but gradually the tragedy of the situation creeps into the poems until the ultimate tragedy is reached when he realizes that his loved one is unworthy of his love.

Schumann's setting of these poems is most sensitive and rich in understanding. The use of the piano places this instrument as an equal with the singer, not as a mere background, in fact, the final word is given to the instrument, rather than to the voice, in the exquisite postlude which follows after the voice has fallen silent.

- I. In the lovely month of May when all the birds were singing, my heart opened to love. And when all the buds were blossoming, I told her of my love.
- II. My tears are transformed into flowers—my sighs into the song of nightingales. If you love me, I will give you the flowers and the song will sound beside your window.
- III. Once I loved flowers and birds and the sun. But now I care for them no longer—you are all of them—I love you alone.
- IV. When I gaze into your eyes, my pain ceases to torment me. When I kiss your mouth, I am blissfully happy. When in your arms, I am in Heaven—but when you say: "I love you," I weep bitterly.
- V. I want to breathe my soul into the lily—and it will sing a song of my beloved. The song will tremble like the kiss she gave me.
- VI. In the great cathedral in Cologne is a painting of the Madonna which has always been precious to me. There are flowers and angels about the face of the Holy Virgin—this face is like that of my beloved.
- VII. I do not reproach you even if my heart breaks. You shimmer in the splendor of your diamonds—but I know that there is no light within your soul . . . In my dreams I know you as you are: night is in your heart and a snake gnaws at your soul. I do not reproach you.
- VIII. If the flowers should know how deeply wounded I am, they would weep with me. The nightingales would seek to console me and the stars would want to shine for me. But they do not know. There is only one who knows: the one who has broken my heart . . .
- IX. Flutes and violins are playing, trumpets blaring. My beloved dances her wedding dance. But through all the noise, I hear how the angels are weeping . . .
- X. Whenever I hear the song my beloved used to sing, I cannot stand it and a dark longing drives me into the mountains. There I feel my unbearable pain dissolving through my tears.
- XI. A lad loved a girl who had lost her heart to another. This lad loved another girl and married her. The first one takes the next man she meets—and the poor lad is the only one who is left lonely and deserted . . . This is an old story but it is ever new. And it breaks the heart of the one who must experience it . . .
- XII. On a radiant summer morning I walk in the garden. The flowers whisper to me, but I am mute. They whisper, looking at me pityingly: "don't be cross with our sister, you sad, pale lad . . ."
- XIII. In my dream I wept, for I dreamed that you were dead. Awakening I felt the tears yet upon my cheek. I dreamed that you left me. Awakening my tears flowed on. I dreamed that you still love me—and awakening, my tears will not cease . . .
- XIV. Every night I see you in my dream and rush to your feet. You look at me and weeping, shake your blonde head . . . You speak to me and give me a nosegay of sombre cypress—awakening, I have lost everything and have forgotten what you said . . .
- XV. The old fairy tales take me back to happy childhood. Wonderful visions open before me . . . Oh if I could but enter this wonderful world of dreams! But the awakening sun every morning destroys all that was so lovely . . .

XVI. I have made up my mind: I shall bury the old songs, the old dreams . . . I need a coffin bigger than the barrel from Heidelberg. Twelve giants shall carry it, who are stronger than the Holy Christopher in the Cathedral at Cologne. They shall bury this coffin in the ocean—only the ocean is great enough to hold it. Do you know why the coffin must be so tremendous? Because I bury my love in it forever.

INTERMISSION

Brahms Sonata in A Major, Op. 100
for Piano and Violin

Allegro amabile

Andante tranquillo—vivace

Allegretto grazioso

Hyman Bress

John Newmark

It is, perhaps, unfortunate that this fully ripened work opens with a phrase, which for the duration of one bar of $\frac{3}{4}$, runs an identical course to the Prize Song of Wagner. It is one of those rare moments in music of which one could say, "Any relationship to melodies living or dead is purely coincidental." After this one bar, in which the melodies coincide in both time and space, the divergence is complete and all in favour of Brahms, who here gives us a dialogue between piano and violin of rare beauty and spontaneity. While there are moments of dramatic action in the course of this three-movement work, the prevailing mood is warm and mellow.

Programme Notes by Mr. R. Godden

PLEASE BRING THIS PROGRAMME TO ALL CONCERTS